

Allen and Michaud Urge NOAA to Fund Penobscot River Restoration Project

Tuesday, December 18 2007

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"After many years of hard work by many in Maine, the time has come for significant federal commitment for this project," said Allen and Michaud. "Now that funding has been passed by Congress, it is important that NOAA support the full \$10 million request for the Penobscot River Restoration Project. We look forward to continuing our work with the Trust to ensure the future success of this project."

The House passed the Omnibus Appropriations Act that provides \$25,379,000 for Fisheries Habitat Restoration to benefit the nation's fisheries by restoring their habitats. In his FY2008 budget request, President Bush requested \$10 million in funding from this account to support the Penobscot River Restoration Project.

(The text of the full letter is attached)

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December 19, 2007

Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.)

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

1401 Constitution Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20230

Dear Vice Admiral Lautenbacher:

As you know, Congress has passed an Omnibus Appropriations Act that provides \$25,379,000 for Fisheries Habitat Restoration to benefit the nation's fisheries by restoring their habitats. In his FY2008 budget request, President George W. Bush requested funding from this account to support the Penobscot River Restoration Project. We strongly support allocation of funds to this initiative by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at the requested level of \$10 million.

Funding for this project is timely. If the Penobscot River Restoration Trust (Trust) is not able to exercise an option agreement to purchase dams along the Penobscot River by June of 2008, the price will escalate by \$1 million and will continue to increase on an annual basis.

The Trust has already secured substantial private and public funding, including over \$10 million private funds and \$5.4 million in federal funding previously from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and from NOAA. An additional \$10 million will allow the Trust to complete the \$25 million purchase.

This project is a poster child for Cooperative Conservation. Signatories to the Penobscot Agreement include industry, the State of Maine, the Penobscot Indian Nation, seven environmental groups and the federal government. NOAA needs to foster and support these types of collaborations if we are all going to achieve the results we need to restore fisheries elsewhere.

This important project will restore 11 species of sea-run fish, including endangered salmon and sturgeon, and fulfill recommendations by the National Academy of Sciences, which stated five years ago that the single best action that could be taken to save Atlantic salmon from extinction in the United States would be to reduce the number of dams on the Penobscot River.

Given the importance of this project to species restoration in the Northeast and along the Atlantic coast and the unique circumstances necessitating dam purchase in the next year, we strongly support allocation of \$10 million to this project from FY2008 appropriations.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Allen

Michael H. Michaud

Member of Congress

Member of Congress